

**Apparatus, Method and Computer Program Product for  
Guaranteed Content Delivery Incorporating Putting a Client  
On-Hold Based on Response Time**

***Abstract***

An apparatus, method and computer program product for guaranteeing network client-server response time while providing a way of putting the client on-hold when the response time temporarily prohibits access to the requested server. The apparatus is implemented within an interface unit connecting a plurality of servers and an on-hold server to the Internet, which is connected to a plurality of clients. According to one aspect of the invention, the method includes the steps of opening a connection between a client and the interface unit; determining which server the client desires a page from; determining the current response time of the requested server; if the response time is acceptable then opening a connection between the interface unit and the requested server if no free connection is open between the interface unit and the requested server; allowing the client to access information on the requested server via the connections; and closing the connection between the client and the interface unit while keeping open the connection between the interface unit and the requested server. Alternatively, if the response time is not acceptable, then putting the client on-hold by redirecting the client to an on-hold server until the response time of the requested server becomes acceptable. According to a "on-hold distribution" aspect of the invention, the interface unit determines the on-hold preference of the client and selects the server hosting that on-hold preference. According to another aspect of the invention, instead of utilizing the interface unit, each server has the intelligence to put the client on-hold when applicable.